

Aug. 22, 2011

Barrels filled with red wine rise nearly to the ceiling at Chateau Ste. Michelle's Canoe Ridge Estate winemaking facility in Washington's Horse Heaven Hills.

(Photo by Andy Perdue/Wine Press Northwest)



Fresh Press is a weekly publication of Wine Press Northwest magazine. In each edition, we review recently released wines from Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Idaho. Feel free to forward to your wine-loving friends and family. For more information on our tasting methods and review process, please go to the last page.

# Spotlight: Stottle Winery

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LACEY, Wash. — Rather than sit idle on the nest egg he created as a web designer, Josh Stottlemeyer decided to open the throttle on his dream of making wine for his own winery.

“There’s the old joke ‘You know how to make a \$1 million in the wine industry? Start with \$4 million,’” Stottlemeyer said. “I was told by professor to never start a winery, and he was teaching viticulture. It was too late at that point. We’d already jumped into it.”

At age 35, Stottlemeyer finds himself three years into his second career, launched after his sale of Helix Group, a multi-layered website design business with four branches throughout the Puget Sound.

In this edition of Fresh Press, Stottlemeyer reveals remarkable consistency throughout the lineup, as all six wines submitted earned recognition from Wine Press Northwest judging panels.

Respected vineyard sources help account for some of that, as Stottlemeyer tapped into Elerding in the Horse Heaven Hills, Sagemoor Vineyard near Pasco, Wash., and Dwelley Vineyard in the Walla Walla Valley. A Walla Walla winemaker, who asked his name not be used because of possible conflict of interest issues, guided Stottlemeyer through his debut vintage in 2008.

“There’s a growing wine community here, and it seems like more and more wineries are going to opening up tasting rooms,” Stottlemeyer said. “We’re hoping for a mini-Woodinville thing down here. I can see more tasting rooms opening up, and for people in Tacoma, we are closer than Woodinville. Once the word gets out about these tasting rooms in Olympia, we think it will really take off.”

There’s a collective effort to help with that. Stottle belongs to the newly formed South Sound Wine Trail, which includes Madsen Family Cellars, McCrea Cellars and Doug McCrea’s new Vina Salida label, Medicine Creek Winery, Northwest Mountain Winery and Walter Dacon Wines. That lineup accounts for half of the reported 16 bonded wineries in Thurston County.

So where is Stottle Winery?



“The closest landmark that everybody seems to know is Cabela’s,” he said. “We’re off the same exit.”

The University of Minnesota graduate plans to take many of the core principles he used to build The Helix Group, which he founded in 2001, and apply them to Stottle Winery.

“You also have to run it as a business,” he said. “You make to keep the quality consistent and create an experience for your customer this is consistent and enjoyable.”

Access to such vineyard sources is one reason Stottlemeyer opted to pursue his dream in Washington state rather than Minnesota. The Golden Gopher grad studied geology and chemistry.

“The university has developed a few varieties that are doing well there, and the last I heard Minnesota is up to 34 wineries,” he said.

So he’s buying fruit from Eastern Washington and studying at South Seattle Community College’s Northwest Wine Academy. His nearby mentors include Lloyd Anderson (Walter Dacon Wines), Dana Madsen and Doug McCrea.

He produces one white — a 2008 Viognier from Dwelley — that has not been reviewed. And there’s also his first commercially produced wine — a 2007 Nebbiolo from Elerding — that will be released later this year.

“You don’t really do the Nebbiolo grape justice until it’s been barreled for at least three years,” he said.

## Spotlight: Stottle Winery

Total production from the 2008 vintage was 750. In 2009, he produced 900 cases. Last year, his case production was 1,000 cases, which is his target. Last November's winter kill will result in an estimate reduction of 40 percent from the Horse Heaven Hills.

"We're further down the totem pole, so we'll be getting Tempranillo from Sugar Loaf and Cab from Elephant Mountain," he said.

During the summers, expect to find Amy working the tasting room as she takes a break from teaching middle school in Tumwater. As a couple, they enjoy kayaking at Alder Lake near Mount Rainier. He's also a gardener with a fondness for bonsai trees.

"Wine has always been a passion for my wife and I," he said. "We've been into the wine tourism thing for many years. I had a very successful web

design company, but I wanted to do something new and completely different."

The Stottlemeyers recognized the importance of developing a brand name for the winery.

"We came up with 80 ideas for names. Most of them were taken," he said with a chuckle.

"Stottlemeyer was too much of a mouthful. The real clincher is that 'Stottle' rhymes with 'bottle.'"

It doesn't stop baseball fans from wondering if Stottlemeyer and his winery are connected to Mel Stottlemeyer, a former New York Yankees pitcher and Seattle Mariners pitching coach. The names are spelled differently, and the families are not related.

"I get asked every single day," Stottlemeyer said. "There are quite a few of them in Thurston County that are related to the baseball family."

## Spotlight: Stottle Winery

**Excellent. Stottle Winery 2008 Cabernet Sauvignon, Horse Heaven Hills, \$30.** This appellation rings the northern banks of the Columbia River and overlooks Oregon, and many of Washington state's top red wines get their pedigree from here. That helps explain why young Puget Sound winemaker Josh Stottlemeyer sources most of his reds from Steve Elerding's vineyard near Alderdale, and this is an age-worthy Cab. Aromatics begin with hints of cherries and chocolate, backed by pomegranate, coffee, lime peel and a piece of Jolly Rancher grape candy. Flavors turn to boysenberry with a feel of mocha in the midpalate, backed by a lick of a grape Tootsie Pop, delicious lime-like acidity and a rush of bold tannins. (48 cases, 13.8% alc.)

**Recommended. Stottle Winery 2008 Syrah, Horse Heaven Hills, \$28.** This signals the biggest production from the first large-scale vintage at this Olympia, Wash., winery, and it is true to the variety, starting with aromas of blueberry, huckleberry and black pepper. Also in the background are whiffs of plums, bittersweet chocolate, tar, chili powder and a sense of meatiness. The palate shows pleasing acidity as plump boysenberry and huckleberry flavors lead the way into a midpalate of Bing cherry juice, followed by just a tug of tannin to give it a medium body. (108 cases, 14.5% alc.)

**Recommended. Stottle Winery 2008 Malbec, Horse Heaven Hills, \$28.** Josh Stottlemeyer viewed the landscape for Merlot in the aftermath of 'Sideways' so he opted to use this lesser-known Bordeaux variety instead. It proved to be a prescient choice as it's becomes one of the most sought-after grapes in Washington. His first release with it brings out aromas of fresh-picked Marionberries and boysenberry with a

rub a lavender. It's a rather hedonistic drink of those same berries, showing lots of extraction. There's a finish of chocolate-covered cherries and raspberry jam. (59 cases, 12.8% alc.)

**Excellent. Stottle Winery 2008 Sangiovese, Horse Heaven Hills, \$24.** This brand new winery in Olympia, Wash., showcases a trio of Italian varieties with its first release, and this spent time in French and American oak. The nose shows chocolate-covered blueberries, backed by black cherry and a late hint of mint, and the palate delivers the food-friendly acidity that's expected. Van cherry, cranberry and pomegranate flavors make this a juicy drink that will pair nicely with pasta slathered in a tomato-based sauce. (160 cases, 13.8% alc.)

**Excellent. Stottle Winery 2008 Barbera, Columbia Valley, \$26.** Sagemoor Vineyard near Pasco, Wash., grows two blocks of this Italian variety, and there's no shortage of delicious acidity in this bottling. The nose brings some fascination, as behind the fruitiness of plum, blueberry and cordial cherry are notes of toffee, grains of sand and barbecue chip seasoning. The drink is smooth and tasty, reminiscent of blueberry-pomegranate breakfast juice and strawberries, backed by a thin streak of tannin. (89 cases, 13% alc.)

**Recommended. Stottle Winery 2008 Tempranillo, Horse Heaven Hills, \$26.** A 20-month program using French oak casts offers lots of smoke and chocolate in the aromas, followed by Bing cherry, lime peel, river rock and cedar. High-toned red fruit of cranberry, pie cherry and red currant is provided on the palate, and the strong shoulders of tannin — typical of this Iberian variety — require some time in the cellar or a pairing with pork roast or duck. (69 cases, 13.9% alc.)

# New releases we've tasted

## Cabernet Sauvignon

**Excellent.** Arch Terrace by Terra Blanca 2007 Terra Blanca Estate Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, Red Mountain, \$20. When he launched his winery in the early 1990s, Keith Pilgrim gained notoriety for the caves he constructed on his Red Mountain estate. In recent years, he has created an amazing destination winery, thanks to a facility that is reminiscent of something one might find in a Tuscan hill town. Since taking over the winemaking at Terra Blanca, Pilgrim has been able to make great strides in quality, and this Cab is evidence of that. It opens with aromas of strawberries, rhubarb, boysenberries and chocolate, followed by lively flavors of Marionberries, black cherries and even blueberries. It's backed with

assertive tannins that are typical of Red Mountain Cab, so this wine should prove to be long lived. (2,200 cases, 13.5% alc.)

**Excellent.** Tamarack Cellars 2007 Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley, \$32. Ron Coleman was in the second wave of wineries to open in Walla Walla, launching Tamarack Cellars in the mid-1990s. Early on, he focused on Merlot but soon began to explore other varieties — and craft them well. This Cab offers aromas of fresh black currants, pencil shavings, cocoa powder and minerality, followed by flavors of boysenberries, cherries, chocolate and fresh leather. This is a broad-shouldered wine that should pair well with richly structured meat dishes. (1,064 cases, 14.3% alc.)

## Wine ratings

All wines reviewed here are tasted blind after being submitted by producers. They are rated Outstanding, Excellent and Recommended by a tasting panel.

**Outstanding:** These wines have superior characteristics and should be highly sought after.

**Excellent:** Top-notch wines with particularly high qualities.

**Recommended:** Delicious, well-made wines with true varietal characteristics.

**Best Buy:** A wine that is \$15 or less.

Priced are suggested retail and should be used as guidelines. Prices are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise noted.

For more details about our judging system, see the last page of this document.

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# New releases we've tasted

## Pinot Noir

**Recommended. Ghost Hill Cellars 2009 Prospector's Reserve Pinot Noir, Yamhill-Carlton, \$60.** Legend has it a miner in the 1860s was murdered for his gold on the hill where this 15-acre vineyard is planted and his spirit still wanders the area, hence the name Ghost Hill. The Bayliss family has owned the land in the Yamhill-Carlton District for more than a century, and the wine is made at Carlton Cellars by Rebecca Pittcock Shouldis. This opens with aromas of white chocolate, strawberries, cherries and chalkboard dust, followed by bright flavors of pie cherries and chocolate. The mild tannins provide just the right amount of backing for this elegant red wine. (93 cases, 13% alc.)

## Merlot

**Excellent. Tamarack Cellars 2008 Merlot, Columbia Valley, \$28.** Ron Coleman launched Tamarack Cellars in 1998, when there were just 13 other wineries in the Walla Walla Valley. Today, more than 100 operate in the region. And he opened Tamarack with a focus on great Merlot — something he's managed to accomplish year in and year out. This edition opens with opulent aromas of oak, brown sugar, black currants, bay rum, toasted cashews and coffee. On the palate, this is hedonistic, with complex flavors of black currants, cherries and pomegranates. The big tannins are somewhat on the roughly hewn side and still need a bit of time to resolve. (1,036 cases, 14.2% alc.)

## Syrah

**Excellent. H/H Estates 2008 Coyote Canyon Vineyard Reserve Syrah, Horse Heaven Hills, \$28.** How good are the grapes that come from this particular

vineyard? Columbia Crest decided to single them out for a rare vineyard-designated reserve-level wine, too. In this wine, however, the fruit stayed with the estate and resulted in a superb and deeply complex red. It opens with sensual aromas of sandalwood, Marionberries and dusty blueberries. The palate shows off lean flavors of Marionberries, lilac, lavender and blackberries. It's a lighter, more elegant style of Syrah. (48 cases, 14.3% alc.)

**Outstanding! Coyote Canyon Winery 2008 Coyote Canyon Vineyard Syrah, Horse Heaven Hills, \$22.** Mike Andrews owns and manages Coyote Canyon Vineyard and its namesake winery in Prosser, Wash., and the wines coming from his Horse Heaven Hills fruit is consistently superb. This Syrah is not only superior to most, but it's also nicely priced at just over \$20. This opens with aromas of sarsaparilla, red currants, blueberries and coffee beans, followed by flavors of tobacco leaf, root beer barrels and rich, ripe blueberries. (114 cases, 14.3% alc.)

**Excellent. Dusted Valley Vintners 2008 Stained Tooth Syrah, Columbia Valley, \$26.** This is a fascinating wine from one of Washington's best Syrah producers. It is co-fermented with Viognier in the Côte-Rotie style, then blended with Grenache and Petite Sirah to give it a Southern Rhône twist. The result is a wine with aromas of blueberries, black cherries, cola and flannel, followed by flavors of red licorice and rich, ripe fruit. It has a fair bit of grip on the entry that smooths out to a pleasant and lengthy finish. (480 cases, 14.7% alc.)

**Recommended. Tamarack Cellars 2008 Ciel du Cheval Syrah, Red Mountain, \$28.** This longtime Walla Walla winery is in an old firehouse at the regional



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## New releases we've tasted

airport east of town and has been one of the region's consistently best producers for more than a decade. This Syrah uses grapes from one of Red Mountain's oldest and best vineyards. It opens with aromas of cedar, boysenberries and pink peppercorns, followed by flavors of Marionberries, pomegranates, blueberries and lingering cherries. A touch of smoke on the palate adds to the intrigue. (196 cases, 14.8% alc.)

**Outstanding! Heaven's Cave Cellars 2008 Destiny Ridge Estate Vineyard The Dweller Syrah, Horse Heaven Hills, \$28.** Hope Moore owns this winery in Washington's Horse Heaven Hills and uses the proceeds from wine sales to benefit her Make the Dash Count Foundation, which works with students. This wine uses grapes from the adjacent Destiny Ridge Vineyard, and it is stunning. It opens with big aromas of bacon, mincemeat, blackberries, raspberries, lavender and black licorice. On the palate, it's a big, complex wine with a jammy entry of blackberries and red currants, followed by fresh cranberries and cedar, all backed with dusty tannins and a dense mouth feel. (108 cases, 14.3% alc.)

### Cabernet Franc

**Recommended. Tamarack Cellars 2009 Cabernet Franc, Wahluke Slope, \$28.** Owner Ron Coleman relied primarily on Weinbau Vineyard — part of Sagemoor Vineyards — for this 100% Cabernet Franc. He used 40% new French oak for the cooperage, and the resulting wine offers classic aromas of plums, cranberries and red currants, as well as intriguing notes of teriyaki. On the palate, this is a bright, juicy wine that provides flavors of red currants, plums, cherries and hints of coffee. (834 cases, 14.2% alc.)

**Excellent. Eaglemount Wine Co. 2007 Cabernet Franc, Wahluke Slope, \$35.** This winery in the historic town of Port Townsend on Washington's Olympic Peninsula is an unusual operation indeed. It produces wines using grapes from the warm Wahluke Slope east of the Cascades and ciders from heirloom apples and pears from its estate. This Cabernet Franc opens with aromas of red cherries, red plums, strawberries and cinnamon, followed by delicate flavors of cherries, plums and restrained oak. Notes of rosemary add to the depth of this red wine. (50 cases, 13.5% alc.)

### Red blends

**Recommended. Forgeron Cellars NV Waldeaux Smithie, Columbia Valley, \$16.** Winemaker Marie-Eve Gilla put together a blend that includes no fewer than seven grape varieties, led by Merlot (48%) and Zinfandel (25%), and she gathered them from five vineyards. The resulting wine is an affordable red with aromas of blueberries, lilac, milk chocolate, plums and vanilla, followed by rich, plush flavors of blueberries,

pomegranates and plums. We'd like this a lot with a midweek roast. (612 cases, 14.1% alc.)

**Recommended. Best Buy! Magnificent Wine Co. 2009 House Red, Columbia Valley, \$10.** Built and priced for quaffing, this red leans toward Cabernet Sauvignon (68%) and Merlot (22%), with the remaining blend rounded out with Malbec, Syrah and Petit Verdot. This opens with aromas of juicy black cherries and restrained oak, followed by flavors of strawberries and red currants. This wine emphasizes acidity over tannin, which makes it approachable in its youth and has us thinking about pairing it with pizza, casseroles or spaghetti with a puttanesca sauce. (25,000 cases, 13.5% alc.)

**Recommended. Terra Blanca Estate Vineyards & Winery 2007 Estate Onyx, Red Mountain, \$52.** This is owner/winemaker Keith Pilgrim's version of a Meritage. It's his most expensive wine, and it's made from Bordeaux varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon (71%), Merlot (24%), Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot. It opens with aromas of boysenberries, fresh mint, red licorice and plums. On the palate, it offers flavors of pomegranates, boysenberries and black currants. The rich tannins still need some time to settle down, and we expect this to continue to improve in the bottle. (457 cases, 13.5% alc.)

**Recommended. Best Buy! Waterbrook Winery 2008 Melange Noir, Columbia Valley, \$15.** For many years, this has been — and remains — one of the real gems for those seeking a great Tuesday night red. Winemaker John Freeman leads with Merlot (33%) in this version of Melange, followed by Cabernet Sauvignon (20%) and Syrah (18%). In all, an astonishing 16 grape varieties are represented here, including Carignane, which we didn't realize was grown in Washington. It opens with aromas of blueberries, pomegranates, leather and chocolate, followed by easy-drinking flavors of boysenberries, cherries and chocolate. (25,500 cases, 13.4% alc.)

### Chardonnay

**Excellent. Best Buy! Pine & Post 2008 Chardonnay, Washington, \$6.** The folks at Precept Wine in Seattle continue to grow in quantity and quality. Since launching in 2003, Precept already has become the second-largest wine producer in the state with more than 750,000 cases annually. With more than 35 different labels, keeping track of Precept can be daunting, but the wines tend to be consistently delicious and fairly priced. This fruit-driven Chardonnay shows off aromas of apricots, lemons, bananas and white peaches, followed by flavors of Asian pears and apples with just a bit of butter. It's clean, delicious and perfect for summer sipping. (10,300 cases, 13% alc.)

# New releases we've tasted

## Pinot Gris

**Excellent. Best Buy! Kyra Wines 2010 Evergreen Vineyard Pinot Gris, Columbia Valley, \$13.**

Evergreen Vineyard is in the future Ancient Lakes appellation and is owned by the Milbrandt brothers. This is a favorite vineyard of Ernst Loosen for Eroica Riesling, and it's a superb spot for Pinot Gris, too. This opens with huge aromas of oranges and herbs, followed by bright flavors of bananas, pineapples, Mandarin oranges and limes. (300 cases, 13.5% alc.)

## Sauvignon Blanc

**Excellent. Best Buy! Magnificent Wine Co. 2010 Fish House Sauvignon Blanc, Columbia Valley, \$10.**

Charles Smith is the brains behind one of the biggest success stories in Washington wine for the past half-decade. He put together this 100% Sauvignon Blanc in a fun package for a great price, and it is marketed and distributed by Precept Wine in Seattle. This opens with aromas of gooseberries, white pepper, jasmine, lemon-lime and Thompson Seedless grapes. On the palate, it is a beautifully balanced wine with flavors of Golden Delicious apples, lemons and starfruit. It's a luscious summer wine to go with — what else? — salmon, halibut or cod. (3,200 cases, 13% alc.)

## Viognier

**Recommended. Vale Wine Co. 2010 Viognier, Snake River Valley, \$16.** Fourth-generation Idahoan and Snake River Valley native John Danielson began working on launching Vale in 2005 and located it at the University of Idaho's Food and Wine Technology Center in Caldwell. There, he makes more than a dozen different wines. This pretty white wine opens with aromas of apricots, peaches, a hint of lime and quince. The palate follows with round, creamy flavors of apricots, peaches and even a hint of maraschino cherries. (168 cases, 13.2% alc.)

## White blends

**Outstanding! Forgeron Cellars NV Walldette, Columbia Valley, \$16.** Winemaker Marie-Eve Gilla learned her craft in her native France before emigrating to the United States, where she has worked at a few different wineries before settling down in Walla Walla. This is a fascinating and unusual blend that is primarily Chardonnay (84%), along with Roussanne and Orange Muscat. The result is a stunning white wine with stirring aromas of starfruit, butterscotch, toffee, anise and a whisper of campfire smoke. On the palate, this is a fleshy wine with flavors of guava, peaches, toffee, pears and citrus. A bit of toastiness from Burgundian barrels slips through, adding to the complexity. (448 cases, 14.1% alc.)

**Excellent. Fidelitas Wines 2009 Optu White, Columbia Valley, \$30.** Owner/winemaker Charlie Hoppes' first wine when he launched Fidelitas in 2000 was Optu, a Bordeaux-style red blend. It has been his flagship wine since, and we're glad to see he has added a Bordeaux-style white to his line-up. This is a classic blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon, and it is a beauty. Its aromas actually remind us a bit of Viognier, with its hints of orange cream soda, but it also displays notes of lemon curd and apricots. On the palate, the Semillon is revealed with fig and lemongrass, and the minerality and citrus zest of the Sauvignon Blanc shine. We'd suggest a seafood bisque, seared scallops with a white sauce or halibut drizzled with lemon juice. (361 cases, 14.2% alc.)

**Outstanding! Best Buy! Gard Vintners 2009 Lawrence Vineyards Freyja, Columbia Valley, \$11.**

The Lawrence family farms this estate vineyard in the Frenchman Hills, which is a pretty special place in Washington just north of the Wahluke Slope near the town of Royal City. The family launched Gard Cellars in 2006, with tasting rooms in Woodinville and Ellensburg. This is a stunning white blend that is nearly equal parts Roussanne and Riesling with a bit of Pinot Gris added to the mix. It opens with appealing aromas of lemongrass, spearmint and circus peanuts, followed by delightful flavors of apricots, yellow grapefruit, peaches and a touch of honey. It's a great wine at an even better price. (200 cases, 13.5% alc.)

**Recommended. Heaven's Cave Cellars 2009 Destiny Ridge Estate Vineyard Yiayia White, Horse Heaven Hills, \$24.** If you happen to be driving along Washington's Highway 14 along the Columbia Gorge near Crow Butte Park, you might notice a stunning winery being built on a hill high above the river. That is Heaven's Cave, and it also overlooks Destiny Ridge Vineyard, where the grapes for this blend of Pinot Gris, Marsanne and Roussanne came from. This opens with aromas of fresh corn and peaches with hints of honey, followed by flavors of pineapples, grapefruit, tapioca and caramel. (74 cases, 13.8% alc.)

## Fortified

**Recommended. Seven of Hearts 2009 Coupe's Cuvée Pinot Noir Dessert Wine, Willamette Valley, \$21.** Byron Dooley operates this winery on Main Street in the Yamhill County wine town of Carlton. His wife, Dana, operates Honest Chocolates in the same location (as well as two other outlets), offering a nice bit of synergy for visitors to the tasting room. This fortified dessert wine uses Pinot Noir, and fermentation was halted with brandy at 6.7% residual sugar. It shows off aromas of red candied apples, strawberries, plums and anise, followed by flavors of raspberries and strawberries. (63 cases, 17.2% alc.)

# Northwest wine regions

## Multi-state appellations

**Columbia Valley:** This multi-state appellation is 11 million acres in size and takes up a third of Washington. Established in 1984.

**Columbia Gorge:** This multi-state appellation begins around the town of Lyle and heads west to Husum on the Washington side of the Columbia River. It was established in 2004.

**Walla Walla Valley:** This multi-state appellation is in the southeast corner of Washington and around Milton-Freewater, Ore. Established in 1984.

**Snake River Valley:** This is in southwestern Idaho and southeastern Oregon. It covers 8,263 square miles and was established in 2007.

## Washington

**Yakima Valley:** The Northwest's oldest appellation (established in 1983) stretches past Wapato in the west to Benton City in the east and includes Red Mountain, Rattlesnake Hills and Snipes Mountain.

**Red Mountain:** Washington's smallest appellation is a ridge in the eastern Yakima Valley. It is 4,040 acres in size. Established in 2001.

**Horse Heaven Hills:** This large appellation — 570,000 acres — is south of the Yakima Valley and stretches to the Oregon border. It was established in 2005.

**Wahluke Slope:** Approved in early 2006, this huge landform north of the Yakima Valley is an 81,000-acre gravel bar created by the Ice Age Floods. It is one of the warmest regions in the entire Pacific Northwest. Established in 2006.

**Rattlesnake Hills:** This appellation is in the western Yakima Valley north of the towns of Zillah, Granger and Outlook. The appellation is 68,500 acres in size with about 1,300 acres of vineyards. It was established in 2006.

**Puget Sound:** This sprawling appellation is in Western Washington. It stretches from the Olympia area to the Canadian border north of Bellingham. It also sweeps through the San Juan Islands and to Port Angeles. Established in 1995.

**Snipes Mountain:** This is one of Washington's oldest wine-growing regions. At 4,145 acres in size, it is the state's second-smallest AVA. Grapes have been grown on Snipes Mountain and at the adjacent Harrison Hill (also part of the AVA) since 1914. This AVA is within the Yakima Valley appellation and was approved in 2009.

**Lake Chelan:** This area in north-central Washington is almost entirely within the Columbia Valley. It is a young area, with the oldest vines dating to 1998. About 250 acres are planted here. It was approved in 2009.

## Oregon

**Willamette Valley:** Oregon's largest appellation stretches roughly from Portland to Eugene. Established in 1984.

**Ribbon Ridge:** This is the Northwest's smallest appellation at 3,350 acres. It is best known for its Pinot Noir and is within the Chehalem Mountains AVA. It was established in 2005.

**Yamhill-Carlton:** This is a horseshoe-shaped appellation that surrounds the towns of Yamhill and Carlton. It was established in 2005. The "District" was dropped in 2011.

**Chehalem Mountains:** This is the largest within the Willamette Valley. This 62,100-acre appellation is northeast of the Dundee Hills. It was established in 2006.

**Dundee Hills:** Many of Oregon's pioneer wineries are in the Dundee Hills within Oregon's Yamhill County. The appellation is 6,490 acres in size. It was established in 2005.

**Eola-Amity Hills:** This important region stretches from the town of Amity in the north to the capital city of Salem in the southeast. It is 37,900 acres in size. It was established in 2006.

**McMinnville:** The hills south and west of the Yamhill County city of McMinnville are more than 40,000 acres in size. It was established in 2005.

**Umpqua Valley:** This Southern Oregon appellation surrounds the city of Roseburg north of the Rogue Valley. It can produce Pinot Noir as well as warm-climate grapes. It was established in 1984.

**Rogue Valley:** The Northwest's southern-most appellation surrounds the cities of Medford and Ashland, just north of the California border. It is known for its warm growing conditions. Established in 2001.

**Applegate Valley:** This small valley within the Rogue Valley is known for a multitude of microclimates that can result in wines of distinction and complexity. Established in 2004.

**Southern Oregon:** This AVA encompasses the Umpqua, Rogue and Applegate valleys and Red Hill Douglas County. It was established in 2005.

**Red Hill Douglas County:** This tiny appellation — just 5,500 acres — is within the Umpqua Valley. Fewer than 200 acres of wine grapes, primarily Pinot Noir, are grown here. Established in 2005.

## British Columbia

**Okanagan Valley:** In the province's interior, this 100-mile valley stretches from the border in Osoyoos to Salmon Arm in the north. Most wineries are near Oliver, Penticton and Kelowna. It was established in 1990.

**Similkameen Valley:** This warm valley is west of the southern Okanagan Valley. It was established in 1990.

**Vancouver Island:** This marine-influenced appellation is in the southwest part of the province. Established in 1990.

**Fraser Valley:** This farming area is in the Lower Mainland, south of Vancouver. Established in 1990.

**Gulf Islands:** This appellation includes approximately 100 islands spread out between Vancouver Island and the southern mainland. Established in 2005.

## About us

Wine Press Northwest is a quarterly consumer magazine that focuses on the wine regions of Washington, Oregon, British Columbia and Idaho.

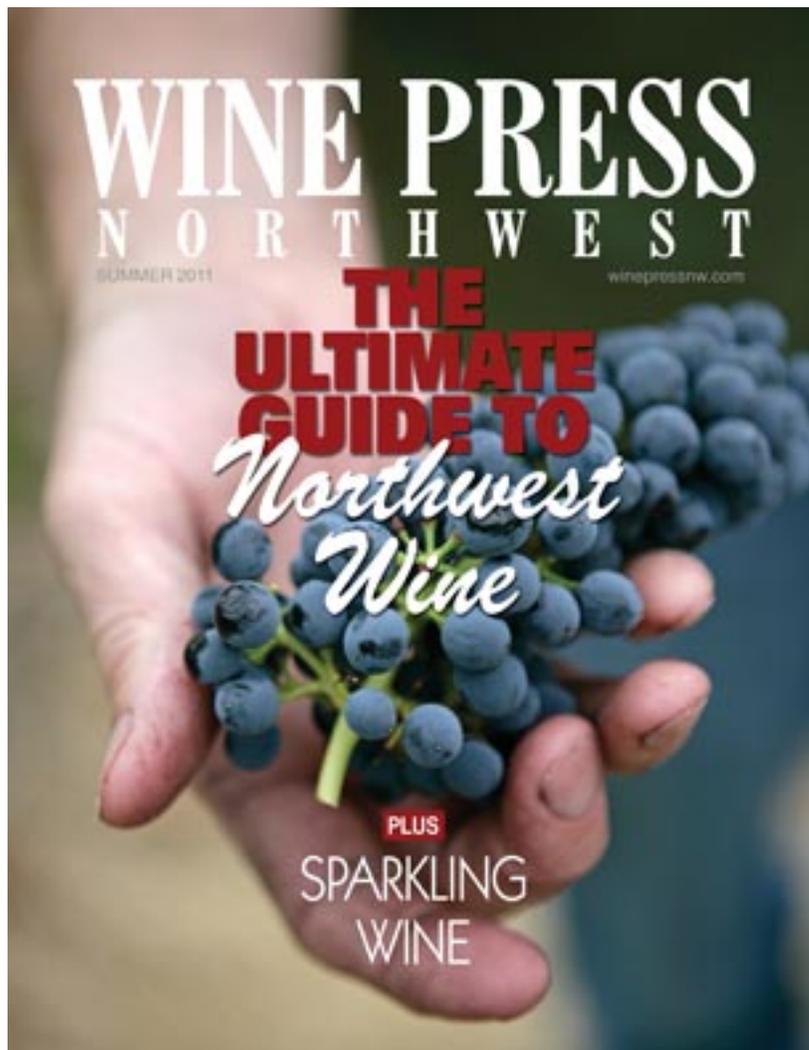
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## Tasting methods

Recent Releases are evaluated under strict conditions to ensure objectivity. Northwest wineries submit wines to Wine Press Northwest for evaluation by Wine Press Northwest's tasting panel. After wines are received, they are stored for at least two weeks and a third party serves them "blind," meaning the tasting panelists do not know the producer. In addition, the panelists are served glasses of wine and are not able to view the bottles or their shapes prior to tasting. Wines are stored in temperature-controlled conditions, allowing them to be served at perfect cellar temperatures.

Price is not a consideration in these evaluations, nor is a winery's advertising activity with Wine Press Northwest, as the magazine's editorial/wine evaluation activities and advertising/marketing efforts are kept strictly separate.

The panel has a combination of technical and consumer palates. If at least three of the four panelists consider a wine technically sound and commercially acceptable, it is included here as "Recommended." The panel may also vote the wine as "Excellent" or "Outstanding," our top rating. Wines considered

unacceptable by the panel are rejected and not included. Reviews are grouped by variety or style and listed alphabetically by winery. Prices listed are in U.S. dollars unless otherwise indicated.

To ensure we maintain an international perspective, our tasting panelists judge thousands of wines annually at various competitions, including: Los Angeles International Wine and Spirits Competition, Riverside International Wine Competition, Dallas Morning News Wine Competition, Indy International Wine Competition, Virginia Governor's Cup, Sonoma County Harvest Fair, Grand Harvest Awards, San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, Pacific Rim International Wine Competition, Long Beach Grand Cru, Washington State Wine Competition, Seattle Wine Awards, Northwest Wine Summit, British Columbia Wine Awards, New York Wine and Grape Foundation Competition, Tri-Cities Wine Festival, Capital Food & Wine Fest and Idaho Wine Competition.